

of the writer seems to be the laudation of one general at the expense of all others. We say this seems to be the object of the writer, although the effusion has signally failed to effect that object; but if the seeming be not true, then has the author adopted a singular, though efficient method to injure the subject of the letter, a method which will tend to accomplish more than could possibly be effected by the combined efforts of fifty open and professed enemies.

Before we make any further remark, we will state that General Pillow, the subject of the letter, denies, not only all knowledge of the existence of the letter, but repudiates it in every sense, and says, that if any are so illiberal as to attribute even the knowledge of it to him, they will be convinced of their error when his official reports are seen.

That the letter is a *bona fide* army production, sent from the seat of war after the first battle in this valley, none who will read it can doubt, for there are sentences and expressions contained in it that we heard on the battle field and on the march to San Angel.

We reiterate, the object of the writer is enigmatical to us. He has not only produced a statement of events calculated to draw ridicule upon the head of one officer, but one that seems intended to effect the other gallant officers who participated in those conflicts.

In giving publicity to the letter, the Delta has assumed curious grounds. In the first place, the editor says it came from a distinguished officer of the army, whose name accompanied it, and in one week's time asserts that it is a *hoax*, leaving the inference that it was gotten up to play upon their confrères. A bad subject for a *hoax*, truly, the character and fame of American officers who are exposing their lives for our country's honor.

The Picayune, in republishing it, has of course its comments, and they are unsparing. The home editors of the Picayune have, throughout, pursued a constant hostility towards General Pillow, worthy of a better cause, and it is not strange that they should take advantage of this great blunder to make capital.

In to-day's paper we cannot extend our remarks on this subject, as we intended, and perforce reserve them for another occasion, when the whole subject will be reviewed to the best of our ability. Here follows the letter:

The famous letter of "Leonidas," which has been the theme of so much remark during the past week, is at last given to the public entire; so at least we understand it. The editor of the Bulletin has obtained a copy of it, and, at our request, he has furnished us with a proof of it, which we proceed to lay before our readers. The passages in italics are those which are understood to have been suppressed in the original publication of the letter. We give the document entire without a word of comment.—*Picayune*.

*Picayune copy of the Leonidas Letter.*

MIXCOAC, MEXICO, August 27, 1847,  
Three miles from the capital.

*Editors Delta—Gentlemen:*

I beg leave to hand you the annexed account of our engagement with the enemy, which commenced on the 19th instant, at a strongly fortified position, about four miles west of San Augustine.

This engagement with the enemy commenced on the 19th instant, by the third division, under the immediate command of Major General Pillow, comprising a force of 3,500 men. The enemy had 16,000, of whom 5,000 were cavalry, and twenty-seven pieces of artillery.

General Pillow's order for the attack was, that General Twiggs should advance with one brigade of his division and assault the enemy's strong work in front, while the other should turn his left wing, and assail the works in *reverse*. He also placed at the disposition of General Twiggs Captain Magruder's battery, and Lieutenant Callender's howitzers, [both of which belong to the proper division of General Pillow.] Having thus opened the battle, he then advanced General Cadwalader's brigade to the support of Colonel Riley, who had moved to turn the enemy's left and attack in *reverse*, and advanced General Pierce's brigade to support General Smith, who had advanced to assault the work in front. The action had now become, with the advancing forces, very severe; and General Pillow, seeing five or six thousand men advancing from the city to reinforce the enemy, whom he apprehended would fall upon General Cadwalader's rear, detached from General Pierce's brigade Colonel Morgan's regiment, [which was yet within reach,] and ordered it instantly to the support of General Cadwalader, who, seeing so large a force approaching his rear, threatening to overwhelm him, halted his forward movement, confronted the enemy, in a strong position, and held him completely at bay. The forces under General Smith, Colonel Riley and General Pierce, were hotly engaged with the enemy's strong battery, and large force of infantry and cavalry, until it was quite dark. Magruder's battery and Callender's howitzer battery were both much cut to pieces, and disabled. Late in the evening General Scott came upon the field, and brought with him General Shields's brigade of volunteers, whom he advanced to the support of the forces under General Cadwalader; but it was so late that they did not get into position until in the night. The next morning, before daylight, the brigade of General Pierce advanced, in execution of the original order of battle, and renewed the assault in front; while Colonel Riley's brigade, supported by General Cadwalader, turned his left, assailed the enemy's works in *reverse*, and most gallantly carried it; capturing a large force of the enemy, twenty-two guns, (among them, those lost at the battle of Buena Vista,) and killing and wounding, in the general engagement, between twenty-six and twenty-eight hundred of the enemy.

Having achieved this signal and brilliant victory, General Pillow immediately resolved to pursue the retreating forces of the enemy, and while his troops were flushed with victory, give battle to a large force said still to be in San Angel, which he did, and drove them before him. He then sent an officer of his staff back to General Scott to say to him, if he would cause General Worth to co-operate with him, he would sweep around the valley, and assault the strong works of San Antonio in the reverse, and carry that place, so as to open the direct route to the capital for the advance of his siege train upon the other battery on that road. General Scott replied that Worth should co-operate with him. General Pillow then moved rapidly around the valley at the head of his victorious forces until he reached Cuycua, within one mile of San Antonio, where he halted to allow his troops a short time to recover their breath, and almost exhausted strength, before engaging the enemy at San Antonio. While waiting for this purpose, General Scott overtook the army. At this moment it was discovered in the distance that the enemy, (seeing their main work had been carried and that they were about to be attacked in the rear,) had abandoned the work at San Antonio and fallen back upon a second strong work at Churubusco. General Scott, who now assumed command for the first time, immediately ordered General Twiggs's division to advance upon the left, and arrest and cut off the retreating forces of the enemy, and assault the strong work at this place on the right, while he ordered General Pillow to lead Cadwalader's brigade and assault the enemy upon the left, and in front of the main work at the bridge or causeway. Twiggs's division soon became desperately engaged with the enemy's right at Churubusco. Pillow's division, in the effort to get to the battle ground, were compelled to wade waist deep in mud and water; the general, dismounting from his horse and plunging through, called upon his column to follow him, which they did with great ardor. He advanced rapidly with it, in front of the enemy's main work, and finding it would be cut down by the terrible fire of grape and cannister which swept down the road, he turned it into the field on the right, to attack the main battery on its left flank. Here his forces and Worth's were joined, and went forward and gallantly carried this work.

During this great battle, which lasted two days, General Pillow was in command of all the forces engaged, except General Worth's division, and this was not engaged, except in taking the last work. (General Scott gave but one order, and that was to reinforce General Cadwalader's brigade.) The position the enemy's battery occupied was a height commanding the only road passing through a wide plain covered over with lava stone, which was rent into deep chasms and fissures, so as to be almost impassable even for infantry. It was entirely so for all other purposes. In this position the enemy had entrenched twenty-nine pieces of heavy artillery, which swept the approach in every direction. The enemy's reinforcements increased their force to 16,000—about 5,000 of which were cavalry. A stronger position could not have

been selected, and a more powerful battery was perhaps never so successfully assailed.

The necessity of attacking this work and carrying it had become manifest, as the army had been marching through marshes and almost impassable roads, nearly half around the city, to find some points upon the enemy's works that could be successfully assailed. Three main works, commanding causeways leading to the capital, had been reconnoitred; and were found so strongly fortified, and defended by such a weight of heavy artillery, that to risk an assault would have been to endanger our whole army. The subsistence of the army had now become considerably reduced and nearly exhausted. It could move no further around the city to reach other causeways, as the mountain now intercepted our route by projecting so far into the lake as to connect itself nearly with the right of the great work at San Antonio. Something had to be done—the prospect before us was extremely gloomy. To reach the great work at Contreras, which was carried by the forces under General Smith, a road had to be opened through the gorge of the mountain. It was to open this road, and to drive the enemy and carry this battery, strong as it was known to be, that Gen. Pillow was ordered out by Gen. Scott. The general's plan of battle, and the disposition of his forces, were most judicious and successful. *He evinced on this, as he has done on other occasions, that masterly military genius and profound knowledge of the science of war, which has astonished so much the mere martinets of the profession. His plan was very similar to that by which Napoleon effected the reduction of the fortress of Ulm, and Gen. Scott was so perfectly well pleased with it that he could not interfere with any part of it, but left it to the gallant projector to carry it into glorious and successful execution.* In this battle, with about 4,500 men, our army engaged an enemy with a force of 16,000, occupying a position which could only be reached with extreme difficulty by infantry, with entrenched works, commanding the approach to it for a mile round in every direction, with, as I have before observed, twenty-nine pieces of artillery. The victory was most brilliant and complete. Nothing could have been better planned than this battle.

[I must relate an interesting and exciting incident that occurred during the rage of the battle. A Mexican officer being seen by one of General Pillow's aids to leave the enemy's lines, and to advance several yards nearer our position, the general, as soon as he heard of the impudent rashness of the Mexican, put spurs to his charger and galloped at full speed towards him. As soon as he got near to the Mexican, the general called out in Spanish, *Saque su sable para defenderse*—let the honor and prowess of our respective countries be determined by the issue of this combat. Straightway the Mexican drew his sword with one hand and balanced his lance in the other, and rushed towards our general, who, with a revolver in one hand and his sabre in the other, waited the onset of the Mexican. The combat was a long and a severe one. The Mexican was a large, muscular man, and handled his arms with great vigor and skill, but our general was his superior in dexterity and coolness. At last the

Mexican made one terrible charge at our general with his lance, which the latter evaded with great promptitude and avidity, using his sword, tossed the weapon of the Mexican high into the air, and then quietly blew his brains out with his revolver. Both the American and Mexican armies witnessed this splendid effort.]

The above incident was published in italics in the *New Orleans Picayune*.

In the two battles, the enemy had about thirty thousand men engaged in deadly conflict. Their total loss in killed, wounded and missing, is near seven thousand, according to their own estimate, including [one thousand six hundred] prisoners, eight of whom are general officers, and about eighty-four of an inferior grade, captains, lieutenants, &c. Our loss in killed and wounded is about [one thousand two hundred;] among the dead is the gallant Col. Butler, of South Carolina, who, until the first day's fight (from a severe attack of sickness) was unable to mount his horse—but the thunder of the enemy's guns nerved him for the conflict, and three cheers were given him as he passed into battle. No one laments his death more than the writer of this communication, who ate with him the last meal of which he partook prior to his death.

The foregoing account of this unparalleled victory I was myself an eye witness to, and will vouch for its correctness, and nothing but an order from the commander-in-chief prevented the occupancy of the city by our troops upon the evening of the second day of attack. I cannot refrain on the present occasion from expressing a wish that Congress may do something for our gallant band, who have, under such adverse circumstances and disparity of forces, carried, at the point of the bayonet, the enemy's outposts, and so nobly upheld and maintained the honor of the American nation. I must not forget to state that we have captured about one hundred and thirty *deserters*, traitors to their country, who, I am informed, are now undergoing a trial, and, in God's name, I ardently wish they may all share that fate they so richly deserve, and be hung by the neck until they are dead, dead, dead.

I am, very truly, yours,

LEONIDAS.

M.

GENERAL ORDERS, }  
No. 258. }

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY,  
*San Augustin, August 19, 1847.*

As soon this morning as the pioneer tools can be arranged and packed on mules, Pillow's division will advance and open a practicable road, to the extent of about two miles, for the siege and other trains, in the direction of San Angel.

Engineer officers will immediately have the pioneer tools assorted and packed for the road, when they will accompany the division, lay out and superintend the work.

Twiggs's division will advance, as soon as practicable, about two miles on the same track, and cover Pillow's division.

Those divisions will take subsistence in haversacks, leave their baggage wagons at this place, and bivouac one night. Their wagons will follow the next day, but each train will be reduced at least one-half, and all surplus wagons left at San Augustin until the pass of San Antonio can be turned and forced.

Worth's division will continue to mask San Antonio, until he receives further instructions.

Quitman's division will remain here in reserve, to guard this depot and to follow the army by the direct road.

The commander of the cavalry brigade will call for special instructions.

All the sick of the several corps will be left in general hospital at this place, which the surgeon general will immediately cause to be established.

By command of Major General Scott.

H. L. SCOTT,  
*A. A. A. General.*

The foregoing is a true copy of the original. Head-quarters, army of Mexico, Mexico, March 22, 1848.

L. THOMAS,  
*Assistant Adjutant General.*

N.

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY,  
*Mexico, November 22, 1847.*

SIR: I received this morning a duplicate (or copy) dated the 15th instant, of what professes to be your appeal, through the Secretary of War, to the government, against the decision of the general-in-chief, to re-convene your late court of inquiry, at your request, dated the 2d instant.

At the end of your appeal (the duplicate acknowledged above) you add a postscript, without date, in which you say "under paragraph 292, of regulations, I have forwarded a duplicate copy of this directly to the Secretary of War, to guard against the hazard of accident."

Having laid your communication before the general-in-chief, I am instructed by him to say, that for thus presuming to write officially to the Secretary of War, except through him, the general-in-chief, and for withholding from him the copy of that letter for a whole week, and for the contempt and disrespect offered to him in the body of the said letter, he, the general-in-chief, desires that you will immediately consider yourself in a state of arrest, confined to the limits of the city.

I am instructed to add that on the foregoing grounds and others, you will, in due time, be furnished with charges and specifications against you, and a general court martial be asked of the President